DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 424 694 EA 029 475

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TITLE	Restructuring in the Classroom: Teaching, Learning, and School Organization.
ISBN	ISBN-0-7879-0239-X
PUB DATE	1996-00-00
NOTE	257p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, 350 Sansome Street, San Francisco, CA 94104; Web site: http://www.josseybass.com
PUB TYPE	Books (010)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Case Studies; Classroom Environment; Constructivism (Learning); Educational Change; Educational Philosophy; Elementary Education; *Instructional Effectiveness; *Instructional Improvement; *School Organization; *School Restructuring; Teaching Conditions

ABSTRACT

The idea that changes in school organization can improve teaching and enhance learning has heavily influenced educational reform over the past decade. With a goal of enabling teachers to promote students' construction of knowledge--so-called "constructivist" teaching--school restructuring has tended to focus on changing: (1) how schools group students; (2) how teachers relate to groups of students and to each other; and (3) how programs allocate school time in relation to class content. Detailed case studies of three elementary schools examine restructuring processes in those schools in order to determine how teachers learned to teach in ways designed to enhance students' understanding of academic content. Following an introduction, three sections of four chapters each provide parallel information on the three schools. Each section includes a description of the school's restructuring agenda and the context in which the school operates; case studies of two teachers (two chapters); and an overview and analysis of the school and the teachers. The final chapter concludes that the relationship between formal structure and teaching practices is weak, problematic, and indirect, and that more understanding of both the desired teaching practices and the organizational conditions that foster their development is necessary. (Contains 58 references.) (MKW)

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